

punitive side ; the stern omnipotent Judge before whom we must all one day appear to render our account.

Luther and the others made war to the knife on all this, and disposed finally of a good deal of it in the most explicit possible terms. Implicitly, their fundamental principle, justification by faith, went to the very root of the whole evil. That meant, as they very well knew, though practical considerations sometimes compelled them in part to dissemble their knowledge, the freedom of the Christian individual, his right and duty to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good, that is, to foster what is living and cut away dead wood. It meant the direct relation of each soul to God, the rule of the Spirit, and his unceasing accessibility; the indispensableness of living experience, which is the final test of religious as of all other truth. It meant the absolute irrelevancy, and worse, of mere pious parrotry. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Therefore, it meant the absurdity, comical, if it were not also so sombre and lurid, of condemning people after the fashion of the so-called Athanasian creed in this world and in the next, if either they showed the least delicacy about accepting what no one could at all understand, an elaborate piece of theological mathematics much harder than the Integral Calculus, or even about refusing to join in the damnation of others who could not see their way clear to attempting such a feat.

But the Reformers had not the full courage of their own convictions. Though they made so much of Paul they never rose to the height of that word of his ; "What is Paul and what is Apollos but ministers through whom ye have believed?" We cannot blame them. So many in our own world, which should surely by this time be old enough to know better, are not yet by far within wind of that word. They did a good day's work—the best since St. Paul. No one has ever been able in this world, and that is a fortunate thing for the world which has so vast and various a load to carry, to work out evenly to the full in all its consequences such an inexhaustible principle as justification by faith. No one man and no score